
MSc Marketing
Strategic planning and marketing

Module code: MNM14
Academic year: 2011-2012
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Assignment brief

Assessment

The module will be assessed by the following means

- 1) Group Coursework (70%) – 6000 words
- 2) Group Presentation (30%)

N.B.: If the module leader is provided with evidence that a certain member of the group is not putting enough efforts towards the presentation and coursework, the module leader is entitled to change that specific group member's marks.

The coursework for this module is focused around formulating a strategic plan. The objective the group coursework (70%) and group presentation (30%) is to provide students with an opportunity to integrate and apply theoretical insights accumulated from lectures and seminars with an assignment which is practitioner oriented. This assessment will help develop and stimulate a student's understanding and management skills. Specifically, the course assessment will attempt to help the student develop knowledge and skills in the application of advanced frameworks, concepts, and methods for making strategic choices at the business unit level. At the end of the course, the student shall have a working knowledge of the approaches that organizations use to resolve marketing strategy issues.

The retail wars

Group presentation (30%)

Five to six students will form a group to formulate a strategy for one of the top ten existing retail supermarket chains in the U.K. (See table 1 below for details). The teams will be making a 20 minute presentation in week 9 that covers a market assessment and a medium term competitive marketing strategy for their assigned retailer.

In line with the theme of the module, the team's strategy should position the retailer distinctively. The team should include a review of the retail supermarket's performance to-date, an assessment of competitors' current and future positioning. The team should make sure that they provide details of how it have arrived at this specific positioning, how it will communicate it in a way that exploits the retail supermarket's particular strengths in the marketplace, why the team thinks it will be successful and what they consider success to be. The team should make extensive use of material available in the public domain and integrate it with theoretical insights. The team should present its case in such a way as to sell it to the retail supermarket's board of directors. To do this the team will need to estimate the investment required to achieve the positioning and the expected results (in terms of market share over the next five years).

Each team is encouraged to critically examine other team's work and provide constructive feedback to other teams.

Group coursework (70%)

Using the feedback from the group presentation, the team will write the coursework (6000 words). This does not include exhibits and references. Over and above the issues discussed in the presentation the coursework will also be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. Evidence of mastery of the frameworks, concepts, and methods developed during the course;
2. The quality of the analysis – were the right questions asked?
3. The feasibility of the conclusions or recommendations – did they follow from the analysis?
4. The effectiveness of the written and verbal presentation of the coursework report.

The group coursework hand-in date is **13th Jan 2012 before 4pm.**

Generic structure guide to presentation and coursework

You are free to follow any format for your presentation and coursework. However, it must suffice two very important requirements: (a) clear integration of theory and practice throughout and (b) justifications of your perspectives.

Following is a generic structure guide you may wish to follow. This guide basically focuses on three fundamental science questions relating to human query of any sorts:

1. Where are we now?
2. Where do we want to be?
3. How do we get there?

If you follow a structure wherein you are answering the above three questions, getting good marks is not going to be that difficult. Well, there are still exceptions!

The presentation/report should incorporate following. We shall look for these when assessing your work:

1. Company background and relevant financial information
2. Resources available to the company for the coming years
3. Macro and micro level company analysis
4. Competitor analysis (could be comparative with the firm chosen)
5. Future strategic direction(s)
6. Strategic action based on 4Ps
7. Actions taken after attending others presentation for adjusting your own strategy (Only for the report)
8. Conclusion and final justification as to why will you be successful (you may use that initial financial data here again to prove your point).

Table 1: The top 10 retail supermarket chains in the UK*

1. Tesco
2. Sainsbury
3. Asda
4. Morrison
5. Marks and Spencer
6. Safeway
7. Somerfield
8. Waitrose
9. Iceland
10. Aldi

* *The top 10 in terms of size*

Source: Keynote (2008), Retailer performance league tables, London: Keynote.